



## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **Fairfield University Student's Journey with Team Woofgang & Co. Inspires Post-Graduate Commitment to Service**

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What begins as a classroom project can sometimes shape the course of a life.

For Maggie Freeman, a student at Fairfield University, her year-and-a-half with Team Woofgang & Co. has led her to take an extraordinary next step: committing to serve as a Jesuit Volunteer Corps volunteer after graduation.

The Jesuit Volunteer Corps (JVC) is a national program that places young adults in communities across the United States to live and work in solidarity with marginalized populations. Rooted in more than 70 years of history, the program is guided by four core values: spirituality, simple living, community, and social justice.

Freeman's path to JVC was shaped over time by her faith, family, education, and hands-on experience in the community.

Her connection to Team Woofgang & Co. began in a marketing course at Fairfield University taught by Professor Mary Kelly, where students were challenged to apply classroom learning to real-world community impact. As part of the course, Maggie and her classmates evaluated and recommended ways to strengthen Team Woofgang's retail store located just steps from campus.

Maggie's work stood out.

Following the course, Christine, Executive Director of Team Woofgang & Co., reached out to Professor Kelly to identify students who could take their involvement further. Maggie Freeman and fellow student Mairéad Kelly were both recommended.

What followed went far beyond a typical internship and reflects the kind of immersive, mission-driven learning that is central to the Fairfield University experience.

Together, they created a short film, *Through a Mother's Eyes*, capturing the perspective of a parent whose adult child is part of Team Woofgang's program. The film offers an honest, deeply personal look at the impact of the organization—not only on Team Members but also on the families who walk alongside them.

"Before Team Woofgang, we didn't know what the future would look like," one mother shares in the film. "Now, we see a possibility. We see purpose."

During her time with the organization, Freeman contributed across multiple areas, including marketing, special events, and direct engagement with Team Members—adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Through those relationships, she experienced firsthand the power of inclusion, dignity, and meaningful work.

Team Woofgang & Co. is a local nonprofit well known throughout the Fairfield community. Founded in 2017, the organization empowers adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities through no-cost vocational training, lifelong learning, and meaningful social opportunities.

"At Team Woofgang, Maggie didn't just participate, she connected," said Christine, Executive Director. "She built relationships, asked thoughtful questions, and really took the time to understand our mission. You could see this experience shaping her."

Kevin Walsh, a Fairfield University graduate '82 and member of the Team Woofgang & Co. Board, sees Maggie's journey as a powerful example of what can happen when students are given meaningful opportunities to engage beyond the classroom. "We thank Maggie for her many contributions to Team Woofgang & Co and wish her well as she continues to embody the Jesuit ideals through her work at JVC."

Freeman's decision to join the Jesuit Volunteer Corps reflects a continuation of that journey, one grounded in service, shaped by community, and aligned with the values of a Jesuit education.

Her story is a powerful example of what can happen when education, opportunity, and purpose come together. Not just shaping a career, but a life committed to serving others.

### **About Team Woofgang & Co.**

Established in 2017, Team Woofgang & Co. is a nonprofit that empowers adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities through no-cost vocational training, lifelong learning, and meaningful social opportunities. By engaging in hands-on experiences, crafting, marketing, and selling dog treats and toy products, participants gain job skills, confidence, independence, and a strong sense of community. We help every Team Member discover their purpose, embrace their strengths, and unleash their unique superpower.

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*Maggie Freeman (red hair, center) pictured with Team Woofgang & Co. Team Members and supporters during a recent event.*